

DAYLIGHT
SAVINGS TIME
BEGINS SUN-
DAY MARCH
14th

Employee Newsletter

March 2021



MARCH BIRTHDAYS

Shannon Raper	2
Tom Graham	3
Trey Hibberts	3
Kathy Killian	3
Cathy Davidson	5
Sara Smith	5
Billy Norton	6
Betty Totherow	6
Christopher Berry	7
Janice Costello	7
Tristan Howard	7
Andria Duncan	7
Peggy Graham	8
James Bethea	10
Travis Evans	10
Mary Lane	12
Tania Firebaugh	13
Paul Fry	13
Dana Allen	15
Brandy Clonts	15
Derrick Palmer	16
Deborah Tucker	18
Amber Byers	19
Jonathan Williamson	19
Dennis Hopen	21
Alan Wildsmith	21
Kevin Creasman	25
George Smith	25
Tim Lominac	27
Becky Turner	28
Drew Silvers	29
Mandi Amos	30

Ages 19 to 81

Sometimes when I'm half listening to my wife, I agree to stuff to get her to stop talking, and that's how I find myself in a linen story during March Madness...Kent Graham

Why do basketball players eat donuts? They love to dunk them.

Commissioners' Board Meetings

March 1st 6:30 pm
March 15th 6:30 PM

Income tax withholding

By now, many of you have completed your tax returns for 2020. I've already had several people change their withholding for the coming year. I just want to give you a heads up that if you change your federal taxes, you need to make sure to look the following pay period and make sure that it does what you're trying to accomplish. The federal tax tables for after January 1, 2020 and pre 2020 are way, way different, so when you change your withholding and we have to update the deduction to reflect the after 2020 table, it may actually hold out less or about the same as before the change. I have no idea why the IRS is taxing them differently, but we just follow the tax withholding tables that they provide—as with so much in government, doesn't make a bit of sense to me. LOL! So if the change you make doesn't do what you intended, you'll need to complete another W4 and probably choose an additional amount to withhold on line c in Step 4. You can see what you are currently claiming by looking at your direct deposit notice at the bottom of the stub part on the right hand side in the withholding allowances box. It's to the right of the box that shows your leave balances. The W4 and NC4 may be found on the County website on the Human Resources page under Employee Information—forms.

401k & 457

Since we were so generously granted a mid-year 3% pay increase, now would be a good time to open a 401(k) or 457 account if you don't already have one. If you do have one, now is a good time to increase your contribution amount and some of you have already done this—good for you. If you don't do something yourself beside our regular retirement contributions to save toward retirement, chances are good that you won't have enough income in retirement to live at a comfortable standard. There is information on the County website on the Human resources page about how to enroll in both. Our 401(k) plan is administered by Prudential and is a "sister" plan to the NC Local Government Retirement plan. Our 457 plan is administered by VALIC. You may enroll in either plan at any time during the year. You do not have to wait for open enrollment to take advantage of these additional benefits that are offered to us as county employees.

PLEASE PAY YOUR TAXES

If you owe county property or auto taxes, please get them paid before tax garnishments start going out. If you have county email, as a courtesy, the tax collector's office will attempt to notify you by email about your balance due. If taxes are not paid, a garnishment will be issued and the garnishment fee is \$60. I have seen people who owed an old vehicle tax bill of \$13 or \$14 have to pay \$43 or \$44 back when the garnishment fee was \$30. If you have a small balance now, the amount you owe could be four or five times as much because you didn't pay it before you were garnished. I don't care who you are, waiting to be garnished before trying to make some kind of payment arrangements is not a smart use of your money. Just saying. Also, the state of NC usually starts garnishing for unpaid state income taxes shortly after the tax season begins, so if you have unpaid NC income taxes, please make arrangements to get those paid, as well. After you've been garnished, it's 10% of your gross pay whether you can afford it or not. It's much better to make payment arrangements.

CONGRATULATIONS TO RICHARD WEST WHO IS RETIRING APRIL 1ST AFTER 6 AND A HALF YEARS AT THE INDUSTRIAL PARK/FAIR GROUNDS CONVENIENCE SITE! BEST WISHES!

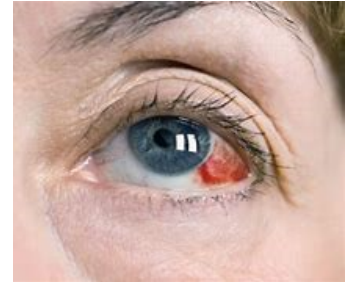
Is there something you would like to see in the newsletter? Please email Melody at melody.johnson@cherokeecounty-nc.gov with any suggestions. Thanks.

March is Workplace Eye Wellness Month from Prevent Blindness

Prevent Blindness has declared March as Workplace Eye Wellness Month to provide employers and employees with free information on the best ways to keep vision healthy on the job.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), each day, about 2,000 U.S. workers sustain a job-related eye injury that requires medical treatment. Common causes for eye injuries in the workplace are:

- Flying objects (bits of metal, glass)
- Tools
- Particles
- Chemicals
- Harmful radiation
- Any combination of these or other hazards



The proper eye protection depends on the hazards in the workplace. For example, for those working in areas with particles, flying objects, or dust, employees must at least wear safety glasses with side protection (side shields). If working with chemicals, appropriate goggles should be always be worn. If working near hazardous radiation (welding, lasers, or fiber optics), special-purpose safety glasses, goggles, face shields, or helmets designed for that task should be worn. Additional recommendations may be found at: <https://www.preventblindness.org/eye-safety-work>.

In office settings, computer use combined with personal use of digital devices such as tablets and smart phones, increases the risk of digital eye strain. Symptoms may include blurred vision, dry eyes or headaches. [The Vision Council](#) reports that more than 87 percent of individuals ages 18 to 39, more than 82 percent of individuals ages 40 to 59, and 76 percent of individuals ages 60 and up use digital devices for more than two hours per day.

[Blue light exposure](#) received from digital screens is small compared to the amount of exposure from the sun. And yet, there is concern over the long-term effects of screen exposure because of the close proximity of the screens and the length of time spent looking at them.

Employers may download and distribute free fact sheets on workplace safety, including “Blue Light and Your Eyes,” at <https://www.preventblindness.org/fact-sheets>.

“Keeping eyes healthy today actually saves on healthcare costs in the future,” said Hugh R. Parry, President and CEO of Prevent Blindness. “We encourage everyone to talk with their employers about the best ways to keep their vision protected at work. And, make sure to talk to an eyecare professional about the best eye protection for any activity.”

To find out more about workplace eye health topics, please call Prevent Blindness at (800) 331-2020 or visit preventblindness.org

Q: What did March say to the madness?
A: What’s all the bracket about?

Q: Where do college basketball players always get their coffee?
A: Dunkin’ Donuts

Hanging in the trophy chest at Syracuse University, there were basketball team photos from past school teams. A player in each photo held a basketball identifying the year – 72-73, 73-74, 74-75, etc.. One day, a freshman was looking curiously at the photos. Turning to a professor, he said, “Isn’t it wierd how every team lost by just one point?”

Q: Why didn’t the struggling NCAA basketball team have a website?
A: They can’t string three W’s together.

Q: Why are college basketball players so excited to make it to the last hole in golf?
A: They love the final fore.